

Dr. Alec MacCall
Talking Points of Presentation to the
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- For purposes of sustaining fishery yield, MPAs make almost no difference *unless the overall fishery is overexploited.*
- Our west coast fisheries have been very lightly exploited for the last few years due to strong management including formal rebuilding plans implemented by the PFMC. Do not be misled by the fact that some of them are depleted due to heavy fishing in earlier years. That is no longer happening.
- The error MPAs and sustainability comes from thinking that fishing activity in the remaining areas will be the same when an area is closed, and that the eliminated fishing activity will simply disappear.
- Under a quota system, closing an area results in intensified fishing in the open areas. The total removals from the entire stock remain the same. It just redistributes the fish and intensifies the "sources" and "sinks"
- There are special cases where MPAs increase sustainable yield, but those usually relate to special life-history traits, such as sex-changing fish and species with social structure (such as California sheephead, but it is rare north of Pt. Conception).
- There are distinct benefits, such as general "insurance" against errors in management due to things we don't know.
- MPAs provide a place where more nearly "natural" conditions occur, allowing not only fished species, but the entire community/ecosystem to function in the way it originally was evolved to do.
- There is also a benefit in weakening selective evolutionary pressure toward smaller fish and earlier maturation, which is going to be a problem sooner or later.